

## ARIZONA ROADMAP TO VETERAN EMPLOYMENT:

A STATEWIDE PLAN TO CONNECT SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND RESOURCES

**Recommendations and next steps for:**  
**Job Seekers • Employment Service Providers**  
**Employers • Community Members**



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## INTRODUCTION

Arizona is home to over **625,000** service members and veterans from all branches and eras of service. These individuals and their families are a great asset to our state and our workforce.

Over the last several years, unemployment and underemployment among this population has been a continuing concern. At a time when more resources are focused on this issue than ever before, there are still gaps in the process of military-affiliated job seekers gaining employment.

In order to effectively focus our efforts statewide, key stakeholders have contributed to the development of the **Arizona Roadmap to Veteran Employment**. This initiative encompasses job seekers, employment service providers, employers and the community at all levels; the overall goal is to clearly identify action steps for each group in order to connect service members, veterans and their family members to employment opportunities, training and resources.

This is an entirely Arizona led and developed initiative and is the first of its kind in the nation. While there are many positive efforts to promote veteran employment across the country, many have fallen short of enacting lasting changes. This comprehensive approach facilitates the systemic change that is necessary in order to produce a collective and sustainable impact, and provides a foundation for innovative solutions and partnerships.

Service members, veterans and their families bring valuable skills and experience to the nation's workforce. A renewed, collaborative, cross-sector focus on this issue will help ensure that every potential employee has the opportunity to be competitive in Arizona's workforce and give Arizona's employers the opportunity to fully benefit from their participation in the civilian workforce.

For more information and updates:  
[www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment)  
[roadmap@arizonacoalition.org](mailto:roadmap@arizonacoalition.org)

## ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND PARTNERS

The Arizona Roadmap to Veteran Employment was developed in partnership by public and private sector organizations, with the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services and the Arizona Coalition for Military Families taking the lead role of convening stakeholders, collecting data and fully developing and implementing the plan. Development of the Roadmap included roundtables, an online survey and a feedback process from stakeholders statewide.



The **Arizona Department of Veterans' Services** is the state agency that enriches and honors Arizona's veterans and their families through education, advocacy and service. The department provides direct services to help veterans connect with their VA benefits through 19 Veterans Benefits Offices statewide; two skilled nursing Veteran Home facilities in Phoenix and Tucson; one Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Sierra Vista with additional cemeteries planned in Northern Arizona and Marana; and a Fiduciary to provide conservator and guardian services for incapacitated veterans.

In addition, the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services provides critical, statewide coordination and technical assistance to public and private sector organizations serving veterans. This includes a focus on targeted populations such as veterans experiencing homelessness and women veterans, as well as partnering to build community capacity to address veteran employment and higher education.

**[DVS.AZ.gov](http://DVS.AZ.gov)**



The **Arizona Coalition for Military Families** is a nationally-recognized public/private partnership focused on building Arizona's statewide capacity to care for and support all service members, veterans, their families and communities. Since launching in 2009, the Coalition has been recognized as a best practice model by the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, National Guard Bureau, the Joining Forces Initiative, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Points of Light Foundation and other national stakeholders.

With a common vision of no wrong door and no wrong person, the Coalition facilitates coordination and collaboration among military, government and community organizations; provides training & technical assistance; and builds infrastructure to connect people and families to the right resource at the right time.

**[www.ArizonaCoalition.org](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org)**

**“I still have a great deal of experience and knowledge to offer...I have a desire to continue working and being a productive citizen in this great country.”**

— Job Seeker,  
*Arizona Roadmap Survey*



## WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THE ROADMAP?

### Job Seekers:

Job seekers and employees have access to information and support resources for their job search and career progression.

### Employment Service Providers:

Employment service providers are equipped with the training, contacts and resources to effectively assist job seekers with job search and barriers to employability.

### Employers:

Employers know the value of these employees, how to connect to this pool of job seekers and can effectively capitalize on and retain employees.

The Roadmap will also provide a platform for innovative solutions and partnerships and serve as a way to document and share best practices implemented by employers, employment service providers and other key partners.

## EMPLOYMENT EQUATION

The Roadmap is structured around an employment equation that focuses on the interests and needs of different key stakeholder groups, as well as the relationship between those stakeholders, with an end goal of successful hiring and retention.



### JOB SEEKERS

Unemployed, underemployed & relocating service members, veterans and family members



### EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Military, government and community employment assistance and support programs



### EMPLOYERS

A range of industries and sizes seeking to hire military-affiliated employees



### SUCCESSFUL HIRING & RETENTION

Connection to employment opportunities, training & resources

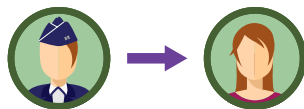




## WHO ARE THE JOB SEEKERS?

### Active Duty Service Members Transitioning from Military Service

This includes service members of all ages who are exiting the military at different stages of their career (e.g. 20+ years of service, medical retirement, less than 20 years of service).



### National Guard & Reserve Service Members

This includes those who are transitioning out of the military, as well as those who are continuing to serve on part-time status but seeking full-time employment.



### Veterans

This population includes those who are no longer serving in the military and is comprised of people spanning all age ranges.



### Spouses, Significant Others & Family Members

A recent national report indicated that 90 percent of active duty military spouses are underemployed. In addition to spouses, other family members may be experiencing challenges in finding employment that can negatively impact the well-being of the family.



The unemployment rate is disproportionately high for veterans ages 18 to 24.

— US Bureau of Labor Statistics



## FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT JOB SEARCH

### **What is their current status?**

Different challenges may arise for job seekers depending on whether they (or their family member) are serving on active duty, planning to transition out of the military, serving part-time in the Reserve/National Guard or already separated from the military.

### **What is their time of service?**

Time of service for military/veteran job seekers can vary, with some having served 4 years or fewer, while others have served for 20 years or more.

### **Where are they located?**

Job seekers may already be living where they wish to find employment, but many desire to relocate after leaving military service.

### **What are they accustomed to?**

Some service members and veterans have only experienced the military workplace (structured, full-time, ongoing access to training and education, clear paths for advancement, an environment of service), while others may also have experience in civilian workplaces before, during or after military service.

### **What are the unknown factors?**

Some job seekers may be experiencing personal issues that are not apparent to others, which could affect their ability to gain and maintain employment.

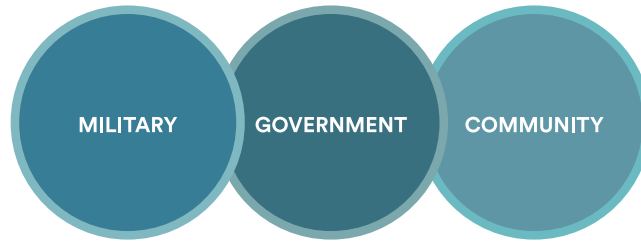
Benefits of Hiring Veterans:

**Advanced team-building skills, strong organizational commitment and experience in diverse work-settings.**

— The Business Case for Hiring a Veteran: Beyond the Clichés



## WHO ARE THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS?



**It is very common for service members, veterans, and their families to access resources in multiple systems of care.**

### **Military**

These programs offer assistance to currently serving military members, transitioning members and their families.

### **Government**

All levels of government (federal, state and local) provide various services designed to help people find employment. Some are focused exclusively on assisting military-affiliated job seekers, while others are available to everyone.

### **Community**

Private, community-based organizations (including both nonprofit and for-profit) provide employment services varying in size and scope depending on the agency. Some focus solely on helping job seekers find work, while others offer employment services as a part of their overall mission.

In addition to organizations that provide direct assistance for finding employment, there are a range of other military, government and community resources that impact the lives of service members, veterans and their families as they connect to employment and advance their careers. This includes institutions of higher education, programs focused on entrepreneurship, trade associations and others.





## WHO ARE THE EMPLOYERS?

When looking at Arizona employers, it is vitally important to consider the size of each employer, as approaches and efforts to hire military-affiliated job seekers will vary based on size, resources and industry. Here is a simple breakdown of what designates an employer's size:

As of 2010, businesses with fewer than 500 employees represented 97% of employers in Arizona and employed 45% of the private-sector labor force.

— U.S. Small Business Administration

**Microbusiness:**  
1–5 employees



**Small Business:**  
6–49 employees



**Medium Business:**  
50–499 employees



**Large Business:**  
500+ employees



The Arizona Commerce Authority is focused on recruiting, growing, and creating businesses in these key sectors:



**Aerospace & Defense**



**Technology & Innovation**



**Renewable Energy**



**Bioscience & Health Care**



**Optics/Photonics**



**Advanced Manufacturing**



**Advanced Business Services**



## ISSUES EXPRESSED BY JOB SEEKERS



**“It’s not just about finding a job; it’s about celebrating a new phase of civilian life and enjoying all that we have been fighting for.”**

— Job Seeker, Arizona Roadmap Survey

**35%** of employed survey respondents consider themselves underemployed.  
**32%** did not access any employment service provider programs.



## ISSUES EXPRESSED BY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS



“There is a huge disconnect between the military transition and workforce systems. There are also many programs out there to serve vets that are not working together resulting in duplicative services.”

— Employment Service Provider, *Arizona Roadmap Survey*



## ISSUES EXPRESSED BY EMPLOYERS



**“We have had several veterans in our employ and have always found them loyal, hardworking, and knowledgeable...they make good leaders within our company.”**

— Employer, Arizona Roadmap Survey



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JOB SEEKERS

The goal of this Roadmap is to strengthen opportunities for you to become employed and grow your career. These are a few things to keep in mind and focus on as you engage in your job search:

### **Know your potential**

Be clear on what you bring to an organization as a potential employee. Your military service and experiences are valuable and many employers believe there is great benefit to hiring someone with a military background or affiliation.

### **Focus on your job search**

Measure your expectations regarding the time, effort and energy that it takes to land a position. Know that the market is competitive and that finding a job fitting your experience and interests can take time. Think of your job search as your full-time job in itself and one that might require developing your skills in different areas, such as networking, interviewing and learning about specific companies you are interested in.

### **Manage the transition**

Consider what you can do to manage the challenges that may accompany this transition. This can include managing your expectations of the job search process and planning ahead while still in the military when possible.

### **Actively engage in available support resources**

Great efforts are being made to honor your service by providing support and assistance for the job search process, but it is your responsibility to take full advantage of what is available to you.

### **Consider alternative & targeted approaches to finding employment**

Traditional full-time employment is just one of the ways to enter the civilian workforce. Consider other opportunities, such as apprenticeships, internships, service learning or vocational training.

### **Next steps for Job Seekers**

1. Complete the job search checklist (available at the website below) to determine your next steps.
2. Connect with an employment support program (locations are available in every county statewide to assist with your job search).
3. Find supportive services to address areas such as housing, finances, family stress and physical health.

Learn more at [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment) (navigate to the job seeker section).



## **GUIDELINES FOR CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The *Guidelines for CARE* for employment service providers to become a partner organization on the Military/Veteran Resource Network were developed for our community by our community with the input of service members, veterans, family members, partners, providers and stakeholders. Keep in mind that the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) and the Arizona Coalition for Military Families (ACMF) can provide training and technical assistance necessary to fulfill the list of requirements for each of these areas:

- **Connect** to the Culture
- **Ask** the Right Questions at the Right Time
- **Respond** Effectively
- **Engage** in the Military/Veteran Community

By becoming an Employment Service Provider partner organization, you will have access to a range of training, technical assistance and support, and have the opportunity to strengthen service delivery, coordination of care and connection to service members, veterans and their families.

### **Next Steps for Employment Service Providers**

1. Connect with ADVS/ACMF for orientation and any needed technical assistance.
2. Schedule any needed training.
3. Implement any needed policies/procedures.
4. Complete the application process to become a partner organization.
5. Build your organization profile and share best practices.

Learn more at [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment) (navigate to the employment service provider section).





## **GUIDELINES FOR CARE FOR ARIZONA VETERAN SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYERS**

The Arizona Veteran Supportive Employer designation is based on Arizona's *Guidelines for CARE*, developed for our community by our community with the input of service members, veterans, family members, partners, providers and stakeholders. The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) and the Arizona Coalition for Military Families (ACMF) can provide all the training and technical assistance necessary to fulfill the list of requirements for each of these areas:

- **Connect** to the Culture
- **Ask** the Right Questions at the Right Time
- **Respond** Effectively
- **Engage** in the Military/Veteran Community

By becoming an Arizona Veteran Supportive Employer, you will have access to a range of training, technical assistance and support, and have the opportunity to strengthen hiring and retention of military-affiliated employees.

### **Next Steps for Employers**

1. Connect with ADVS/ACMF for orientation and any needed technical assistance.
2. Schedule any needed training.
3. Implement any needed policies/procedures.
4. Complete the application process to become an Arizona Veteran Supportive Employer.
5. Build your organization profile and share best practices.

Learn more at [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment) (navigate to the employer section).



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Everyone in our community can have an important role in strengthening support for service members, veterans and their family members:

- Extend support and encouragement to service members, veterans and their families wherever you encounter them (community, school, workplace, etc.).
- Sometimes just listening and sharing a resource is enough.
- Consider becoming a Military/Veteran Resource Navigator to learn how best to connect a person or family into the available network of services and resources.
- Encourage organizations you are connected to, whether through your employer, civic group, faith-based community or other organization, to get involved in strengthening support for Arizona's military, veteran and family population.

### Next Steps for Community Members

1. Keep key resources on hand to share with service members, veterans and family members when needed:



Access confidential help 24/7, by phone, chat and text  
[www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net)



Connect to Arizona-specific resources and information  
[www.MilitaryVeteranResourceNetwork.org](http://www.MilitaryVeteranResourceNetwork.org)

2. Attend a Military/Veteran Resource Navigator training (find the schedule of upcoming trainings statewide at [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/events/navigator-training](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/events/navigator-training)).
3. Connect organizations you are affiliated with to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services & Arizona Coalition for Military Families to become partner organizations.

Learn more about the Roadmap at [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment).

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